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Newsletter



OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CLINTON P. ANDERSON, *Secretary of Agriculture*
CHARLES F. BRANNAN, *Director*

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WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

Let's take another look at the price index now that the commodity markets have caught their breath after the February decline. It's a good idea, in fact, to view the present index in its proper long-term perspective and see where everybody stands in the price picture as it relates to food.

During the mid-February to mid-March period food commodity prices -- as recorded by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agricultural Economics -- dropped 9 per cent. You have to go back to 1921 to find a comparable decline -- 12 per cent between February and March of that year. At 279 per cent of its 1909-14 average the present index is 28 points below January's record high of 307. BUT it is 17 points above 262 of a year ago.

Checking price decreases of particular products, we find that the meat animal price index dropped 48 points -- the sharpest drop ever recorded -- from 379 as of mid-January to 331 in mid-February. BUT the index is still higher than at any time prior to March of 1947, and it is 44 per cent above the high point of 230 reached in May 1919 following World War I.

The index of food grains shows a record 71 point drop to 251 per cent of the 1909-14 average as a result of price declines in wheat and rye. BUT rice, at \$3.12 per bushel, brought 14 cents more on the average in February than it did the previous month.

Seasonal declines in prices for dairy products lowered the price index for this group 6 points (2 per cent) to 307 in mid-February. BUT the index was 14 per cent higher than a year ago.

Thus, the cold hard fact remains that Mr. Average Consumer is planking down more dollars on the grocery and meat counters for the same amount of basic foods than he did a year ago.

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The newest figures from the Department's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations tend to erase any excessive optimism over the grain supplies in the four principal exporting countries -- the United States, Canada, Argentina and Australia.

Total supplies, as of January 1, 1948 were estimated at 123 million short tons, the smallest in recent years. These supplies were about 8 per cent less than on January 1, 1947, but were more than 20 per cent below the large stocks at the beginning of 1944 and 1945.

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Back in October, Secretary of State George C. Marshall declared: "The connection between the individual American and world affairs is unmistakably clear -- our foreign policy has entered the American home and taken a seat at the family table."

On another occasion, the Secretary of State declared: "Hunger and insecurity are the worst enemies of peace. For recovery and political stability, Europe needs many things, but the most elemental, indispensable need is food."

Since these statements were made, Czechoslovakia has taken the road toward totalitarianism. And this paralysis creeping across Europe tends to move its tentacles farther West.

The United States is the principal exporter of food to alleviate hunger abroad and, thus, reduce the danger to world peace. You are helping to maintain the security of your country by participating in the food conservation program. You know that FOOD FIGHTS FOR DEMOCRACY.

Now here is a practical suggestion to bring home to the members of your community the need for food in Western Europe:

1. Contact members of foreign extraction organizations who are able to report on the food situation in their countries. They may be able to do so either through correspondence with relatives or friends, or through first-hand travel knowledge.
2. Contact organizations which may have had a representative abroad. For example, Miss Marjorie S. Hunt of Utica, N. Y., a representative of the Y.W.C.A. National Council of Business and Professional Women's Clubs to Oslo, Norway, visited Czechoslovakia and other European countries late last year.
3. Contact your local press and radio outlets for stories, radio talks and interviews with the people you are able to "dig up" as sources of information relating to the food crisis abroad. In other words, act as a "food conservation reporter".
4. Through foreign extraction groups watch foreign language newspapers as a source of information to point up the need for food shipments to distressed Europe.

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Secretary of Agriculture Anderson has proposed conservation agreements for the baking and brewing industries. In the case of the bakers, he proposed a voluntary industry agreement which would conserve wheat by

virtually eliminating consignment selling. Mr. Anderson suggested the following four-point program for the brewing industry:

1. No brewer will use wheat or table-grade rice.
2. The use of malt barley by individual brewers shall not exceed by more than five per cent the quantity used during the comparable month of 1947.
3. The use of all other grains by individual brewers will be reduced 15 per cent below that in the comparable month of 1947.
4. Each brewer will be authorized to use a minimum of 120,000 pounds monthly, with exceptions for hardship cases.

These agreements, taken together, could add in a year nearly 15,000,000 bushels of grain - wheat and corn - to our short supplies.

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The Senate has voted to restrict distillers' use of grain until October 31. The measure which passed by a vote of 54 to 16 provides:

1. That the Department of Agriculture limit the amount of grain to be used in making whisky to not more than 2,500,000 bushels a month.
2. Each distiller will be allowed an amount of grain each month in proportion to the amount he used in the period from December 1946 to June 1947.

The bill has gone to the House of Representatives for consideration.

RADIO PLUGS FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION

Station WNOX in Knoxville, Tennessee, is broadcasting a series of six 10-minute programs on grain conservation. The first broadcast was made February 17. The program is sponsored by a local packing company and copy is being furnished by the State Extension Service. Tennessee has been hammering away for months now on food and feed conservation. On the back page of a recent issue of the Tennessee Extension Review there appeared a photo of a montage made up of press clippings covering the conservation program. The items ranges from "Fumigate Grains To Cut Insect, Disease Losses" to "Raise Gardens in '48".

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Here is an excerpt from a report submitted by Bert Cooper, Secretary of the State Citizens Food Committee, to Governor Phil. M. Donnelly of Missouri:

"The University (Missouri) has a daily radio service that goes to 27 radio stations that touch this state. Practically every one of those has some mention of some phase of the feed conservation program. In addition, the Farm News Service that goes to all the newspapers in the state

also is now carrying feed and food conservation information in each issue."

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The National Broadcasting Company will dramatize the current war against rats as a feed conservation measure. Titled "Rats and Men", this show will be heard as a presentation of the program "Living 1948" on a coast to coast hookup from 4:35 to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Network time Sunday, March 14. Check your local NBC station for the time as some stations are recording the network show for playback later in the evening.

PRAYER OF ABUNDANCE

The Sodality Union of Washington, D. C., writes to us in this vein:

"Admiring the wonderful charity and the great generosity of our American people in helping our less fortunate brothers in all parts of the world, we cannot help being terribly proud of every fellow citizen in this grand country. So anxious are we to prevent the starvation of others that we have voluntarily entered upon a program of food conservation that more and more of what we have might be sent to others that they might live."

Then, the Sodality suggests that one Sunday be set aside so that every citizen in the nation may be asked to offer two prayers -- one of thanksgiving and the other for continued blessings for the bountiful harvests of this country. Space does not permit the printing of both prayers but we are pleased to submit the following:

PRAYER FOR A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST

We pray Thee, O Lord of the Harvest, to bless these fields Thou has given us and in Thy Infinite bounty give them the life and the power to bring forth the grain, the herbs and the fruits Thy Children need. O Lord God, Who hast taught us in Thy Own prayer to ask from Thee our daily bread, grant, we pray Thee, this abundance unto us. Pour down Thy blessings, we beseech Thee, O Lord, upon Thy people and on all the fruits of the earth, that when collected they may be mercifully distributed to the honor and glory of Thy Holy Name. Through Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, word without end. Amen.

We will keep you informed on events in Washington and the programs of local committees and organizations. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to send us news of your activities in the voluntary food and feed conservation program.